

4 February 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: 4 February Meeting of the Indochina Steering Group

1. Several current developments were discussed at the outset. I briefed the group on the performance of Peking radio during the night and the concern built up for a time over the suspension of newspaper printing and radio broadcasts in China. It all got straightened out when Peking modified a statement it had issued earlier concerning the Laotian situation. Once the modification was made, printing and broadcasting resumed.

25X1A 2. [REDACTED] asked what we made of the report of Truong Chin's death. The discussion boiled down to a consensus that there would be no real reason for Hanoi to keep this secret. The fact that no announcement has been made means he's probably still on the scene. [REDACTED] 25X1A reported that they have now "confirmed" that Sihanouk was in Hanoi on 26 January. There remains uncertainty as to whether Chou has been in Hanoi recently.

25X1A 3. [REDACTED] reported on the DDCI's concern about the situation in northern Laos and various actions laid on to obtain more data concerning the Communist threat. As 25X6 [REDACTED] of yesterday Souvanna was anxious to have two [REDACTED]

25X6 [REDACTED] sent into the Long Tieng area. Meanwhile, the [REDACTED] believes [REDACTED] want to withdraw their 25X6 [REDACTED] from the Bolovens Plateau region for use in northern Laos. [REDACTED] "concern" over northern Laos is really concern about the situation in the Vientiane plain. 25X6

25X1A 4. Contrary to his view last week that there was 25X6 no readily identifiable Communist rationale for overrunning

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25X1A

the north, [REDACTED] said he now thought there was much greater danger of this, and in the event of outbreaks in the Panhandle, strong action is apt to ensue in the north. [REDACTED] said at a minimum the Communists will want to build the appearance of great danger of a larger war.

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[REDACTED] is convinced that the Chinese will grow much louder in this regard and will do all they can to add to the air of crises. [REDACTED] for example, could see the possibility of a Chinese feint in the northwest toward the Ban Hoai Sai area. I suggested that though the hour was late, it might be useful for ONE to take note of recent events and forecast some of the things that may be in store. [REDACTED] said he would draft an outline and coordinate with OCI which would have to help in producing any such paper.

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5. [REDACTED] reported that the draft of an estimate on South Vietnam had been circulated. It tries to identify major problems with which a GVN must cope to survive. There is to be a review of the draft at the meeting of the BNE tomorrow at 10.

25X1A

6. It has been agreed that an OER officer will go [REDACTED] (Action: FE. Please insure that this officer has whatever requirements you want him to service for you.)

7. There was a brief discussion of the CHUP operation. It involves some 10,000 ARVN. The purpose is to clear Route 7 while chewing up main force enemy units. The operation will ultimately run as far north as Kratie.

8. I noted that we had turned out our memo on big Minh's prospects and it is available around town.

25X1A

[REDACTED]
Acting Director of Current Intelligence

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